

tion at home, probably, as the same narrative informs us, under the guidance of a private tutor. With" this version a diary of studies for the year 1820 that has come down to us in a mutilated form would appear best to harmonise; it certainly bears out a further statement that his education was at this time 'severely classical.' Readers of *Vivian Cfrey* will recollect how the boy when he went to Burnsley Vicarage, 'although more deficient than most of his own age in accurate classical knowledge, found himself in talents, and various acquirements, immeasurably their superior,' and how afterwards when he 'sat down to read' at home, 'twelve hours a day, and self-banishment from society, overcame in twelve months the ill effects of his imperfect education.' The same tale is told in almost the same words of Contarini Fleming, and though we may doubt whether young Disraeli was equally successful in overcoming the defects of early training, it is clear that he made an heroic attempt. In the list of authors which he claims to have read while at Higham Hill there is probably a good deal of anticipation of subsequent study, but the testimony of the diary is all in favour of its virtual accuracy. Questions have been sometimes raised as to the extent of Disraeli's classical acquirements, and he has been accused in this connexion of pretending¹ to knowledge which he did not really possess. The truth would seem to be that he contrived at this time to make himself a fair Latin scholar and retained in after life a moderate familiarity with the great Roman authors ; but that his Greek was scanty in the beginning, and, in spite of his efforts after leaving school, remained scanty to the end. A thorough training in the Greek language and a better acquaintance with Greek literature might have been wholesome discipline for a mind that was too apt to be slipshod and a taste that was too apt to be artificial. But the Disraeli that we know would not have been himself if he had received the stamp that a public school education places upon intellect and character.